

Hitchin Town 1, Wycombe Wanderers 2

ENGLAND international centre-back, Ted Powell, went through the kind of day to forget, while Wycombe Wanderers were serving up yet another warning for the Isthmian League to remember at Top Field on Bank Holiday Monday, writes **Mike Whitesman**.

It just wasn't Ted's day: booked in the first half, he scored a spectacular own goal in the second, and in so doing brought Hitchin within reach of an equaliser. But, although Welsh wingman, Geoff Anthony, was carried off injured, and Town fought like tigers, the Blues still held both points.

If further proof that Wycombe are championship material was needed, this was it. Their sixth win in succession confirmed unquestionably that Brian Lee's present squad is the hottest thing to hit Isthmian League football since Tommy Lawrence first set to work on moulding the Enfield elite of the late '60's.

Hitchin lashed them with everything they had in the second half; and there can be no doubting they had more than most. Wanderers, however, never showed their true class to full at any time during the 90 minutes.

Paul Giggie — a small right winger in much the same mould as Wanderers' own Anthony — Tony Brothers and 'Charlie' Townseld in particular spear-headed a searching counter-attack.

And, roared on by rival supporters, both teams brought the game to fever pitch as Wycombe dealt with the greatest threat to face them so far this season.

Wanderers lined up unchanged

from Saturday's outing, but soon found the Canaries to be a much tougher opposition than Sutton. By mid-period their backrow was being stretched across the width of the pitch, with all the collective 'cool' of Delaney and Powell in evidence.

Fractionally against the run of play, the visitors moved ahead after 23 minutes when Bernie Bremer drove the ball to the right, and goalkeeper, Turner failed to block its path.

Spurred by this breakthrough, Wycombe turned on the heat, but unhappily for Powell, referee Turvey got tangled up in one Wycombe raid, and took unkindly to a spur-of-the-moment comment passed by the number four. Mr. Turvey had no hesitation in halting play to put Powell's name in his book.

Hitchin's Bernie Gogan went off for treatment on what turned out to be a broken nose in the 39th minute, and, although returning to see out the half, was already on his way for hospital inspection by the time the second half began.

Before the interval however, Wycombe increased their advantage with an injury time goal from Tony Horseman's corner. Keith Blunt headed the ball powerfully through the crowded area.

With substitute Tony Harley on for Gogan, Hitchin set about reducing the backlog.

Inside 11 minutes of the new period, they came right back in the reckoning when Powell met his second 'Waterloo' of the match, dive-heading the ball into his own net. Maskell, having covered the flight of Howkins' shot, was going completely the wrong way for the diversion.

2 That set the trend for the rest of the afternoon, as a thrilling struggle developed for time; Wanderers wasting, Hitchin preserving it.

Both Anthony and Robinson needed attention after a crunching tackle ended what had been a promising move on Wycombe's part. But, the hapless Welshman suffered more than the Hitchin left half, and was carried off to be replaced by Rundle for the last 20 minutes.

Later examination showed Anthony to have received bad bruising just above his right knee — a less serious injury than at first feared.

HITCHIN TOWN: D. Turner; H. Pratt.